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TAGS: PREL MARR ZF XW RS
SUBJECT: RUSSIA ON UNSC DISCUSSIONS ON CHAD, KENYA,
ETHIOPIA/ERITREA, DARFUR

REF: A. MOSCOW 281

1B. ADDIS ABABA 352

Classified By: Political M/C Alice G. Wells for reasons 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) Summary. The MFA told us that it would send four helicopters and 200 personnel to Chad, and was concerned over growing tensions on the Ethiopia/Eritrea border, but would take a "wait and see" approach to further UNSC involvement in conflicts in Kenya. The GOR believed that international pressure had played a critical role in bringing Kenyan leaders to the negotiating table and supported and were optimistic about Annan's efforts. The MoD has still not decided whether to send helicopters to Darfur. End Summary.

Chad

¶2. (C) In a February 12 meeting, MFA International Organizations Principle Counselor Vitaliy Liplinskiy told us the GOR had decided to send four MI-24 helicopters and 200 personnel to Chad (reftel A). He noted that the GOR shared the U.S.'s position in the UNSC, and felt that "some progress" had been made on the ground. He reiterated GOR appreciation of French aid in evacuating diplomats' families from N'djamena.

Kenya

¶3. (C) The MFA issued two statements, on February 1 and 5, condemning the violence in Kenya, calling on political leaders to restore peace, and noted with satisfaction the decision of the two parties to search for a negotiated solution. While the GOR supported the February 6 UNSC Presidential Statement, East Africa Section Chief Aleksei Filipov told us Russia did not believe that accusations of election fraud should be mentioned, as such claims are a matter of "internal politics and not the province of the UN."

He said Russia viewed the situation as stemming from a political crisis that had now turned into a tool for personal gain through ethnic violence by the population and through political hardlining in the elite. Filipov told us that the GOR supported Annan's call for a political settlement, but with an emphasis on immediately stopping the violence.

¶4. (C) Liplinskiy said the GOR was "optimistic" about Annan's chances, owing to his popularity in Kenya, but that the GOR would "wait and see" what, if any, actions would need to follow in the Security Council. He noted that the GOR at this time was reluctant to consider the specter of sanctions or peacekeeping. Filipov added that Kenyan parties had resisted negotiations, but concerted pressure from the international community had brought them to the negotiating table.

Ethiopia and Eritrea

¶ 15. (C) MFA International Organizations Counselor Albert Sitnikov told us the GOR was watching the situation with the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) in the Horn of Africa with concern (reftel B). The GOR believes that Eritrea must end fuel restrictions to UNMEE and end troop restrictions in the DMZ immediately, Sitnikov said. He told us that the GOR proposed to demarche Asmara in concert with P-5 members, but Beijing believed that it was "not time" yet. Consequently, Sitnikov said the MFA would prepare a letter from Lavrov to Asmara warning it of possible consequences for its actions. Sitnikov told us that the GOR was very concerned about the situation and felt that, combined with military buildups on both sides, any provocation could re-ignite conflict.

Darfur

¶ 16. (C) Liplinskiy apologized that our request for helicopters for Darfur was still "languishing" with the Russia Ministry of Defense, and told us he would contact us when a decision has been made.

BURNS